

Add new claims 18 and 19 as follows:

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~~18.~~ (New) A method as claimed in claim ¹²~~14~~, wherein the current traffic status of the system is determined prior to effecting routing of narrowband traffic across the system.

¹⁶
~~19.~~ (New) A telecommunications system comprising:-
an asynchronous transfer mode (ATM) network; and
a plurality of adaptive grooming routers (AGRs) coupled to the network, each AGR comprising an ATM switch including means for adapting narrowband traffic received at said AGR to/from the ATM adaptation layer,
wherein the AGRs are interconnected across the ATM network by virtual trunks and are arranged to function as a distributed narrowband exchange to set up narrowband connections across the ATM network.

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Remarks

The examiner's reconsideration of the application is urged in view of the amended claims presented herewith and comments which follow.

Claim 1 has been amended, independent claim 11 has been amended to make it dependent on claim 1 in order to overcome a clarity objection by the Examiner, independent claims 12 and 13 have been deleted, independent method claim 14 has been amended to place it in conformity with amended claim 1, claim 15 has been deleted, a new claim 18 dependent on claim 14 has been added and a new independent claim 19 has also been added.

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The Examiner has firstly rejected the claims of the application as filed as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which the applicant regards as the invention. It is as a means of addressing this objection, in addition to other objections, that the applicants have substantially amended independent claims 1 and 14, deleted independent claims 12 and 13 and added new independent claim 19. It is believed that the Examiner will find that the subject matter of the invention is now sufficiently distinct as to overcome his rejection under 35 USC 112.

The Examiner has also rejected claims 1 to 17 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Duault (US 5,600,641) but in his statement of rejection in Section 5 of the Office Action, the Examiner himself suggests that the basis for his rejection is, in part, due to the very broad interpretation he is placing on the terms of the claims as filed having regard to his earlier objection that such language is indistinct. Consequently, it is submitted that the amended and new independent claims as now offered for the Examiner's consideration do distinguish the present invention over the disclosure of Duault. In this regard, it will be seen that the present invention comprises an ATM network which has connected to it a plurality of adaptive grooming routers which each comprise an ATM switch including at least one adaptive virtual junctor (AVJ) as a means for adapting narrowband traffic to and from the ATM adaptation layer and wherein the AGRs are interconnected across the ATM network by virtual trunks such that the AGRs comprise a distributed narrowband exchange for establishing narrowband connections across the ATM network. It will be understood by a skilled person from an understanding of the description of the present invention contained in the application that the function of the interconnected AGRs acting as a distributed




narrowband exchange is to form narrowband connections over a packet network. Thus the ATM system is, in this regard, functioning as a connection orientated packet network.

The system of Duault differs from the present invention in a number of ways. It is firstly a connectionless system in which routes across a network are formed through a hierarchy of switches in which packets are queued in the system and transmitted across the system via various routes according to priority based on, for example, a quality of service prioritization. Consequently, this system cannot provide narrowband connections between a first narrowband local exchange connected to a first AGR to a second narrowband local exchange connected to a second AGR of the system in the manner as disclosed in the present invention. A further contrast of the present invention over Duault is that the AGRs of the network of the invention are interconnected via the ATM network such that it is normally only necessary to employ two AGRs to form a narrowband connection across the ATM network between two local exchanges, where said local exchanges are not connected to the same AGR.

A further difference between the present invention as claimed and that of Duault is that, in the present invention, by enabling narrowband connections to be formed across an ATM network between local exchanges, for example, the system provides the advantage of being able to reject traffic at source in the case of congestion of the network rather than at the delivery point as is the case with the system of Duault.

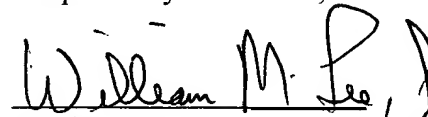
In view of the above described differences between the present invention as now claimed and the teaching of Duault, it is submitted that the present invention is distinguished



over Duault in a manner that is patentably distinct Allowance of the application is therefore solicited.

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Respectfully submitted,



William M. Lee, Jr.

Registration No. 26,935

Lee, Mann, Smith, McWilliams,

Sweeney & Ohlson

P.O. Box 2786

Chicago, Illinois 60690-2786

(312) 368-6620

(312) 368-0034 (fax)





Version With Markings To Show Changes Made

1. (amended) A telecommunications system[, including an asynchronous transfer mode (ATM) network, and a plurality of adaptive grooming routers (AGR) coupled to the network, wherein the AGRs comprise a group adapted to function as a single distributed or virtual transit exchange whereby in use to set up narrow band connections across the ATM network.]comprising:-

an asynchronous transfer mode (ATM) network; and

a plurality of adaptive grooming routers (AGRs) coupled to the network, each AGR comprising an ATM switch including at least one adaptive virtual junctor (AVJ) for adapting narrowband traffic received at said AGR to/from the ATM adaptation layer,

wherein the AGRs are interconnected across the ATM network by virtual trunks and are arranged to function as a distributed narrowband exchange to set up narrowband connections across the ATM network.

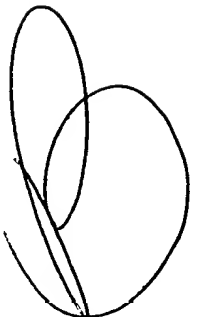
11. (amended) [An ATM telecommunications system, comprising a distributed virtual transit exchange and having] A telecommunications system as claimed in claim 1 including means for determining the current traffic status of the system whereby to effect routing of narrow band traffic across the system.

14. (amended) A method of routing telecommunications traffic in a system comprising :-

an asynchronous transfer mode (ATM) network; and

a plurality of adaptive grooming routers (AGRs) coupled to the network, each AGR comprising an ATM switch including at least one adaptive virtual junctor (AVJ) for adapting narrowband traffic received at said AGR to/from the ATM adaptation layer,

wherein the AGRs are interconnected across the ATM network by virtual trunks and are arranged to function as a distributed narrowband exchange to set up narrowband connections across the ATM network. [, including an asynchronous transfer mode (ATM) network having uncommitted bandwidth, and a plurality of adaptive grooming routers (AGR) coupled to the ATM network, which AGRs comprise a group adapted to function as a virtual transit exchange whose fabric and control are distributed over the group, the method including determining the current system status whereby to set up narrow band connections across the ATM network based on that status determination.]

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